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ABSTRACT

A case study used a social constructivist theoretical framework to study two students who participated in a writing process classroom in New York City. The teacher used literature to connect reading and writing in her lessons and conducted individual writing conferences with students. Students kept notebooks of their personal experiences and reflections and then selected from those to turn their writing into a project for a larger audience. Anthony, a middle-class Hispanic boy, had a successful conference with the teacher where they talked about organization and description. He appropriated the classroom dialogue which focused on imagery and figurative language and transformed it to use in his own text about his grandmother and in the writing conference he conducted with a first grader. In contrast, Anita, a working class, African-American girl, wrote an "oral" narrative that did not match the teacher's conception of good writing. Neither her text nor her conference with a younger student reflected the classroom dialogue. Instead, Anita chose to focus on mechanics and grammar, safe topics with which she felt comfortable. The study raises questions about the teacher's responses to cultural differences and the match between the teacher's images of good writing and those of the students. (Author/SR)

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Research Report 91-3

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Sarah J. McCarthey

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Research Report 91-3

# TWO CASES OF STUDENTS' INTERNALIZATION OF DIALOGUE FROM WRITING TIME

Sarah J. McCarthey

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**Abstract**

Using a social constructivist theoretical framework, this paper presents cases of two students who participated in a writing process classroom in New York City. The teacher used literature to connect reading and writing in her lessons and conducted individual writing conferences with students. Students kept notebooks of their personal experiences and reflections and then selected from those to turn their writing into a project for a larger audience. Anthony, a middle-class Hispanic boy, had a successful conference with the teacher where they talked about organization and description. He appropriated the classroom dialogue which focused on imagery and figurative language and transformed it to use in his own text about his grandmother and in the writing conference he conducted with a first grader. In contrast, Anita, a working class, African-American girl, wrote an "oral" narrative that did not match the teacher's conception of good writing. Neither her text nor her conference with a younger student reflected the classroom dialogue. Instead, Anita chose to focus on mechanics and grammar, safe topics with which she felt comfortable. The study raises questions about the teacher's responses to cultural differences and the match between the teacher's images of good writing and those of the students.

# TWO CASES OF STUDENTS' INTERNALIZATION OF DIALOGUE FROM WRITING TIME[1]

Sarah J. McCarthey[2]

A shift in the dominant theory and practice of writing instruction, away from a focus on the written product and form of writing toward a process approach to writing, reflects the increased attention to the social context in which learning occurs and the role of language in developing literacy (Flower, 1989; Freedman, Dyson, Flower, and Chafe, 1987). Current school practices that lie at the heart of the process approach to writing are whole-group discussions about literature (Calkins, 1986) and the teacher-student writing conference and peer response groups in which the teacher and an individual student or peers discuss a student's text (DiPardo and Freedman, 1988). Both researchers and practitioners have suggested that the dialogue that takes place between the teacher and student and among students may be central to helping students become critical readers and monitor their own strategies during writing (Calkins, 1986; Daiute, 1985).

Understanding the role of dialogue in learning to write requires a theoretical framework that delineates the relationship between dialogue and learning. A social constructivist perspective of learning and development (Cole, 1985; Rogoff, 1986; Vygotsky 1978; 1986; Wertsch, 1985) views dialogue within social contexts as central to learning. This view provides a theoretical framework to examine the role that dialogue plays as students develop as writers within the contexts of their classrooms.

The social constructivist perspective consists of several key features: (a) knowledge and knowing have their origins in social interaction (Bruffee, 1984; Harre, 1984; Mead, 1934; Wittgenstein, 1953); (b) learning proceeds from the interpsychological plane (between individuals) to the intrapsychological plane (within an individual) with the assistance of knowledgeable members of the culture (Rogoff, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978; 1986; Wood, Bruner, and Ross, 1976); and (c) language mediates experience, transforming mental functions (Leont'ev, 1981; Vygotsky, 1986; Wertsch, 1985). Transformation of mental processes occurs as the external, social plane is internalized and children reorganize and reconstruct their social experiences into individual, psychological processes (Leont'ev, 1981; Tharp and Gallimore, 1988; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1980). The internal reconstruction of external operations is referred to as internalization.

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[1]This paper was originally presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, April 1991.

[2]Sarah J. McCarthey, a doctoral candidate in teacher education at Michigan State University, was formerly a research assistant in the Institute for Research on Teaching and the National Center for Research on Teacher Education. She is currently a research assistant in the National Center for Research on Teacher Learning, a renaming of the NCRTE.

Harre (1984) describes four phases of the internalization process that proceed cyclically from the social to the individual and back to the social. The four phases include (a) *appropriation* in which the individual participates in social practices, (b) *transformation* in which the individual takes control over the social appropriations, (c) *publication* in which the transformation again becomes public, and (d) *conventionalization* in which the transformation is reintegrated into the social practices. This internalization of social experiences highlights two key features of Vygotsky's (1978; 1986) developmental theory—the role of the knowledgeable other and the role of dialogue.

Because learning occurs as the result of the individual's interactions with others, the role of the knowledgeable member of the culture is vital to facilitating learning. Initially, children cannot function independently on tasks but need the assistance of an adult or more capable peer through a process called scaffolding (Applebee and Langer, 1983; Cazden, 1983; Rogoff, 1986; Wood, Bruner, and Ross, 1976). An essential means through which a knowledgeable member of the culture can scaffold instruction for a learner is dialogue. The dialogue itself becomes the means through which the external, social plane is internalized to guide the child's own thinking (Cazden, 1983; Palincsar, 1986; Palincsar and Brown, 1989; Wertsch and Stone, 1985); the transformed dialogue is referred to as "inner speech" (Vygotsky, 1986). Bakhtin (1984, 1986; as cited in Emerson, 1983), whose ideas parallel Vygotsky's, suggests that inner speech is modeled upon social discourse; inner speech consists of dialogues conducted with imagined audiences drawn from the many voices a person has encountered.

The purpose of the study was to investigate what students internalize from the dialogue that occurs during writing time with particular attention to teacher-student writing conferences. The research questions that guided this study were: What do students internalize from the dialogue that takes place during writing time? and How is this internalization reflected in students' talk about their texts, in the texts they produce, and in their teaching of other students? The study is important in contributing to our understanding of the role of dialogue in learning, while supporting or challenging current practices in writing process classrooms.

## *Method*

The method of data collection and analysis for this study was consistent with assumptions from interpretive/qualitative traditions of research (Erickson, 1986). The method also draws from Merriam's (1988) work on case studies, while analyses draw from sociolinguistic literature that suggests that interactions are governed by context specific rules

(Cazden, 1986; 1988; Florio-Ruane, 1987; Green, 1983; Hymes, 1972). This study is part of a larger study that includes analyses of the cases of four students.

## Context and Participants

One fifth/sixth-grade classroom in an ethnically diverse public elementary school in the heart of New York City was the focus of the study. This classroom was selected for the study because the teacher had been part of a previous study investigating the Teachers College Writing Project as one of the 11 sites conducted by the National Center for Research on Teacher Education. The teacher, a female Caucasian, Elma Meyer,[3] had extensive knowledge and understanding of the Writing Workshop described by Calkins (1986) and had been implementing a writing process program for over four years. She also had a trainer from the Teachers College Writing Project working with her in an ongoing way.

Meyer was an experienced elementary teacher in her 40s who read children's literature extensively, participated in adult workshops to discuss literature, and kept her own writer's notebook. She was a high energy New Yorker who talked at length at high speed. Her style of interaction shares much with what Tannen (1984) has called "high involvement" style which includes speaking at a fast pace, asking personal questions, and making use of "machine gun questions."

The student participants in the study were selected by the teacher according to some guidelines by the researcher requesting an ethnically diverse set of students with differing oral and written abilities. I selected the two cases, Anthony and Anita, described here to serve as contrasts both in their experiences in the classroom and in what they internalized from the classroom discourse.

### Anthony

Anthony was a nine-year-old fifth grader whose parents came from Puerto Rico. He considered Puerto Rico a second home even though he had lived in Manhattan all of his life. His father was a local newscaster; his mother worked in the school as an aide. Anthony considered himself an inventor and a writer. He often experimented with scientific activities at home and kept a scientific journal of his discoveries. He read a great deal, especially fiction, and liked writing, although he revealed that he frequently got "writer's block." Anthony had participated in writing process classrooms before by virtue of his

[3]All names of the teacher and students are pseudonyms.

attendance at this school where other teachers had used features of the Writing Workshop. He expressed, however, that this classroom was different because he could write with his "heart," whereas last year he used his "head" to write reports.

Much of Anthony's talk was filled with metaphor. For instance, he explained that his teacher "was like magic" because she could help him over his writer's block; during this explanation he used objects to represent himself, his writing, and his teacher. In class he shared his examples of good writing that also included the use of figurative language such as "the pineapple filled my mouth with joy." He expressed the differences between his notebook and his project in this way, "A project is about one thing, but my notebook is a 1001 taste adventures."

Anthony had many entries about his past childhood and his responses to literature. However, many of his entries centered around experiences with his grandmother. He selected these entries and used them as the basis for his project about his grandmother entitled "My Grandmother Matilda."

**Anita**

Anita was an 11-year-old sixth grader from the Bronx. She was an African-American who lived with her brother and her mother, who worked as a maid. Anita liked singing and dancing and entertaining people, although she was very withdrawn in whole-group class discussions. In fact, Anita never contributed orally to any of the classroom discussions, nor did she share her writing with the whole class.

Anita took the train to school each morning by herself. She had not had many opportunities to participate in writing process classrooms previously because she reported having done little writing before and this was her first year at this school. Anita believed that her notebook was a place where she could write down the good things and the bad things that had happened to her. In fact, she told the story of how she had convinced a woman on the train to keep a notebook of her own life because writing down things could help her.

Anita did not enjoy reading; she read very little, and the teacher reported that she read at a very low level. Anita, however, enjoyed writing in her notebook, and she reported having written five pages on one story, "Lenox Hill Camp," which was the most she had ever written in her life. Anita had several entries about experiences from her past life and several references to her father, implying some abuse. By far the longest entry was the Lenox Hill Camp story which she had worked on for more than two weeks. However, as

the cases will reveal, Anita did not use entries from her notebook nor her Lenox Hill Camp piece for her project. Instead, she wrote a poem about her grandfather.

## Sources of Data

Data were collected over a five-week period. This period was selected to follow the inception, development, and revision of a text over time. For the first two weeks of the study, students kept notebooks (which they had been keeping since mid-September) in which they recorded personal experiences, memories, observations of the world, or responses to literature they were reading. The students were generally free to write about topics of their own choice. During the last three weeks of the study, students were in the process of selecting an issue, theme, or important person from their notebooks to turn into a revised, polished piece for a larger audience such as classmates, parents, or relatives.

The sources of data map onto the Harre model of internalization such that classroom observations of writing time were intended to gather data about the *appropriation* phase in which students had opportunities to interact with the teacher and each other during writing time. Interviews with the students relate to the *transformation* phase in which the individual takes control over the social interactions. Student texts and writing conferences with younger students relate to the third phase of Harre's model by providing the opportunities for students' transformations to again be made public in the *publication phase*. Sources of data are described in more detail below.

### Classroom Observations of Writing Time

Classroom observations of activities during writing time were videotaped and audiotaped. The audiotapes were transcribed verbatim and supplemented by my field notes. The activities during writing time included (a) teacher-directed lessons in which the teacher and students discussed issues related to writing (minilessons), (b) writing time in which the students worked on their individual texts, (c) teacher-student writing conferences in which the teacher discussed the students' texts with them, and (d) share sessions in which a student shared a text and the whole class responded. Observational data focused on the two children as they participated in classroom activities.

### Teacher Interview

The teacher interview provided data about the teacher's intentions and perceptions of the various writing activities and perceptions of students. Questions focused on her goals for the two students during the writing time, her perceptions of the students as writers, and

her perceptions of the texts that students had produced. I interviewed the teacher on two occasions during the five weeks.

**Interviews With Students**

Two different types of interviews were conducted with each student—formal and informal. Formal interviews took place at the beginning and again at the end of data collection, were given outside the classroom context, and used a set of predetermined questions for all students. Questions in the initial interview focused on the backgrounds of students, their beliefs and attitudes about writing, and the texts from their notebooks. Questions in the exit interview focused on their completed drafts and events that had occurred within the classroom.

Informal interviews were conducted within the classroom context on a frequent basis. For instance, after a writing conference with the teacher, I would go over to the student and ask questions about the interaction. In addition, I talked to each child at least twice a week about the text he or she was working on, the changes made, and where the student had gotten the ideas about which he/she was writing. These questions emerged from the classroom context and were unique to each individual. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim.

**Teaching a Younger Student**

Each of the participating students conducted a writing conference with a first-grade student about the younger student's text. These conferences provided students with the opportunity to demonstrate what they had internalized about writing. These conferences took place during the last week of data collection in the hallway at lunchtime. They were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim.

**Student Texts**

The text was one representation of what the student had internalized. All notebook entries that the two students had written since the beginning of the year were collected and photocopied. In addition, each draft of the project was collected, including the revised final project.

## *Analysis*

I performed a qualitative analysis of all transcripts from writing time, the student-student conferences, and students' texts and interviews to produce individual case

studies of each student. Triangulation of data was the key factor in analysis. Two aspects of the dialogue were the focus of the analysis: content of the dialogue and conversational strategies that the teacher and students used.

The first type of analysis was a content analysis that draws from previous research suggesting that features such as topic selection, audience, purpose, organization, word choice, punctuation and spelling constitute the content of writing discussions (Daiute, 1989; Nystrand, 1986). Because the content of the classroom dialogue during this five-week period focused on imagery and figurative language, I focused the content analysis on these features. For example, the teacher often used such expressions as "getting a picture in the reader's mind" and "description" to represent the use of imagery. She also encouraged students to make comparisons and to use metaphor through the use of examples and through expressions such as "beautiful language." My analysis, then, traced the absence or presence of such features and followed changes within these features throughout the various sources of data including the teacher's talk during writing time, the students' talk about their texts in the interviews, in the texts themselves, and in the students' teaching of younger students.

The second type of analysis focused on conversational strategies from the writing discussions and conferences that students may have internalized. These strategies drew from sociolinguistic research that suggests that interactions are governed by context-specific rules and that meaning is created both by how speakers interact as well as what they say (Cazden, 1986; Florio-Ruane, 1987; Green, 1983; Hymes, 1972). Examples of conversational strategies included such features as the use of directives, elicitations, clarifications, and explanations (Willes, 1983). Additionally, aspects of discourse such as prosodic cues including pauses, pitch, stress, and speed were used where appropriate, especially in analyzing the teacher-student conferences and the student-student conferences (Erickson and Mohatt, 1982; Tannen, 1984). By having a small group of researchers watch segments of the videotaped observations with me, I was able to have additional perspectives and validation for my interpretations of the verbal and nonverbal interactions between the teacher and students.

The unit of analysis was the speaker turn, consistent with Bakhtin's (1984) suggestion that the "utterance" (equivalent to speaker turn) ought to be the unit of analysis for analyzing dialogue as opposed to the linguistic form of the sentence. Turns are indicated by a numbering system, beginning with the first speaker turn. Pauses are indicated in the transcripts by one slash (/) indicating a short pause and two slashes (//) indicating a longer pause. Overlapping talk is indicated by the use of two dashes (--). Words that were emphasized by the teacher or student are indicated in bold letters. Nonverbal cues,

especially proxemic relationships such as distance between speakers, that were observed from the videotapes played a role in describing interaction styles (Hall, 1966).

The overriding issue in analysis of conferences was How did each of these strategies function within the context of the particular conference or interaction? For instance, overlapping talk might function in the conversation as an interruption. In another context, however, overlapping talk might be an indication of synchrony between speakers because they are "in tune" and can almost complete one another's sentences. Likewise, "mhmmm's" can function as either an indicator of a lack of interest in the discussion or encouragement for the speaker to continue. I analyzed student texts by looking at topic, use of imagery, and figurative language as evidenced by adjectives and metaphor, and structure of text. For instance, structure might include thematic unity—focus on one topic or narrative structure—or the use of a chronology of events as the organizing framework. Interview data functioned in a supportive role to provide further context and the student's point of view about interactions.

These analyses resulted in individual case studies of the students, suggesting what the students had internalized from the dialogue over the course of the development of their texts. These cases of the two students are presented after a brief summary of the teacher's image of good writing and significant classroom events that seemed to have contributed to students' internalization.

## *Description of Classroom Themes*

### Content of Classroom Sessions

For purposes of analysis I have divided the 17 class sessions I observed into three phases: (a) discussion of qualities of good writing found in literature to generate notebook entries, (b) the transition from notebooks to projects through the use of conferences, and (c) use of literature for revision and editing of project pieces. The focus of the sessions in Phase 1 was on providing examples of "good writing" and identifying those qualities for students to include in their own notebook writing. Examples included texts from literature, from the teacher's notebook, from students' work from previous years, and from students' own notebooks. Phase 2 of the observation period consisted of minilessons and conferences about selecting topics and working on projects for an audience. Phase 3 consisted of using literature to revise and improve students' drafts for their projects. During this phase the teacher focused on aspects of good writing such as language, the use of time, voice, and having a strong beginning.

### Teacher's Image of Good Writing

Data from interviews with the teacher as well as classroom observations of whole-class sessions and conferences with students suggests that Meyer had a particular idea of what constituted good writing. Two ideas were central: (a) personal experience produces the best topics for writing, and (b) good texts use imagery and figurative language.

Meyer strongly believed that children should write about issues with which they are very familiar. For her, this meant that children should write from personal experience and write true stories rather than fiction. This belief underlay Meyer's rationale for having students keep writers' notebooks. Meyer focused on two related features of language in her lessons and in her interactions with individual students: imagery and figurative language. Imagery consisted of including descriptive adjectives, adding detail to events and settings, and avoiding the use of common words such as "nice" and "good" for the purposes of forming a picture in the reader's mind. Figurative language included any type of comparisons, especially similes and metaphors.

In almost every class session, the teacher and the students discussed the uses of language by authors and by student/authors. The teacher did not refer to imagery or figurative language by these names but used such expressions as "description," "beautiful language," detail and comparisons. The teacher referred to "getting an image in mind" or creating pictures for the reader. When reading literature to the students, Meyer would point out particularly effective language. These examples tended to be filled with adjectives and selected details. The focus on imagery and figurative language is especially salient for examining the two cases of Anthony and Anita.

## *The Case of Anthony*

### Opportunities for Appropriation: Social Interaction During Writing Time

#### Anthony's Classroom Participation

Anthony was highly involved in classroom discussions and interactions. He contributed to many discussions through his verbal responses as well as by sharing his entries from his notebook. His responses were generally valued by the teacher as evidenced in the reactions she had to his contributions in several discussions. When discussing qualities of good writing, Anthony offered two examples from his notebook which were both noted and praised by the teacher. Later Meyer used "pineapple filled my mouth with joy" as an example to illustrate the use of "good language."

In the discussion about choosing topics with two trainers and Meyer, Anthony offered his writing about his grandmother as an example of an "obsession" to which the teacher and trainers responded positively. He also provided his interpretation of the meaning of *Galimoto*, a book the class had read, in the session in which the teacher and students discussed what the book was about. Meyer's response to his analysis that if you believe in something, it can happen, was "Absolutely right, Anthony! Absolutely right. If you believe and you want something badly enough and you really want it, then you can make it happen."

**Teacher-Student Writing Conference**

Below, Anthony's conference with Meyer about his grandmother piece is presented to understand how the teacher-student interaction might influence Anthony's thinking and to trace his internalization process from the conference to his own text. On the occasion of this conference, the teacher had come over, noting that Anthony was using a printed copy of his piece (one he had created at home on his word processor) as a basis for subsequent writing. So far he had written on notebook paper, "Thank god. I still remember what My Grandmother Always wore loose clothes. She was very nice. She was old. thank."

Meyer approached him, squatting down by his desk so that she was at eye level with him. She started out in an irritated voice with three questions right in a row without pausing for a response. Here is their interaction:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | T[4]: | What are you doing now? Why are you copying this over now? Are you copying this over exactly as it is here? |
| 2. | Anthony: | No/ I was just adding on// |
| 3. | T: | No// You need to write more about this/ You need to pick a specific time/ You need to work up a specific time/ OK? |
| 4. | Anthony: | Oh/ Ok// (unhappily). |

In this first segment, Meyer expressed irritation and appeared to have an expectation that Anthony was merely writing in handwriting what he had already typed on the computer. Anthony responded by being defensive and trying to explain that he thought he was adding on to what he had written. Meyer began, then, with a series of elicitations and then moved into providing some directives about what Anthony needed to do. In the second part of the

[4]The letter T is used to represent the teacher.

conference the teacher became more specific about what she wanted Anthony to do, explaining her interpretation and imposing her organizational structure on the printed piece. The conference continued in this way:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 5. | T: | You need to/ . . . first there is// The way I see it is there are three parts to your grandmother piece// One is a description of what she looks like/ OK/ and it is not enough to say my grandmother always wore nice clothes/ You need much more/ |
| 6. | Anthony: | I know I am going to write more/ |
| 7. | T: | It seems the second part of this is that's where you start stories about the times you spent together// So then it starts stories/ One story is she used to play the (pause trying to read word) |
| 8. | Anthony: | Pilon [an instrument] |
| 9. | T: | Ok// And now you need much much much more about that and what it was like for you/ and how you sat together with her/ and where you sat/ and what it felt like// Much more from your heart/ OK?/ |
| 10. | Anthony: | Yeah// |
| 11. | T: | Then this/ |
| 12. | Anthony: | This is just like a-- |
| 13. | T: | Take out this part/ "My grandmother was very nice//" Obviously you don't need to say that/ OK/ because we know she was very nice because you are writing this piece about her// |
| 14. | Anthony: | Yeah// |
| 15. | T: | OK?/ Right/ The third part here/ Anthony/ it seems to me is about the time you would go to the heights/ OK/ And you need to have much more// |
| 16. | Anthony: | Yeah/ I am still working on it/ |
| 17. | T: | Well/ then get with it/ |

18. Anthony: That's what I am going to do//

In this part of the conference Meyer used many directives, telling him what he needed to do, interspersed with statements that were more informative in nature where she told him how she was thinking of the piece. Anthony completed statements in which he was suggesting his intention to write more and where he was clarifying information central to the decoding of the text, for example, 'pilon' (a Puerto Rican instrument). Despite his being occasionally interrupted, Anthony's attitude was not defensive. His 'yeahs' of agreement were enthusiastic and sincere, unlike his initial responses in the first segment.

The body language of both teacher and student suggested a kind of synchrony in their interaction throughout the second portion of the dialogue. Meyer sat close to Anthony and alternated eye contact with him with looking at what he had written. During this time, Anthony nodded and smiled a great deal at the suggestions she recommended. At this point in the interaction, the momentum picked up; this is demonstrated by Anthony's moving his arm bent at the elbow in a continuous back and forth motion and changes in the teacher's voice. In the following part of the dialogue, the teacher's voice changed intonation, reflecting a shift from being solely directive and informative. She became engaged in certain aspects of Anthony's text. Here is the last segment of dialogue from their conference:

19. T: Now I want to see a total description/ I want you to work right now/ "My grandmother always wore loose clothes//" I want you to fill up this page now with descriptions of what she looked like// That's all/ and then show it to me// OK/ Just what she looked like/ the kinds of things she wore/ what her face was like/ what her hair was like//

[As she is saying this, Meyer writes (1) description, (2) pilon, stories, and (3) heights on Anthony's printed piece.]

Go ahead/ Go ahead// So now you can say/ "thank god"/ You can start it that way// I love that/ " Thank god/ I remember/ I still remember// what my grandmother looked like//" It is just what you just said/"What my grandmother/ looked like//" OK?/

[Anthony is writing.]

Now you can start it like that/ "She always/ wore loose clothes/" What did they look like?/

20. Anthony: They were/ I always saw blue with hearts on it//

21. T: Go/ go/ go// Explain what the embroidery looked like/ Was it neat?/ You see what I am saying?/ You really need to go for that and do that//

In this segment Meyer continued to provide directives about how Anthony should add more detail to his piece. She stood up, rather than being at eye level so that she could write on his paper more easily. She wrote down an organizational structure for him on his printed sheet, suggesting he should place ideas within those categories. As she did this, she read more of his piece aloud and became engaged in what he had written. Evidence for this engagement includes a change in intonation and pitch. As she got to the part, "Thank god I still remember what my grandmother looked like" she slowly drew out her words, almost whispering, yet saying them with expression while she wrote. Her tone became increasingly more gentle. Anthony's voice matched this gentleness as he explained what he remembered about her clothes. At this point, Meyer became quite excited and said loudly, "Go. Go. Go," touching him as she left.

Although much of the conference was about the organization of the text, the point of contact between Anthony and Meyer occurred when they were discussing description. Towards the end of the conference, Meyer provided ideas for what Anthony should include in his grandmother piece once she was engaged. Likewise, Anthony connected with her and offered a description of his grandmother's clothes. In this segment of the conference we can see how Meyer's emphasis upon imagery and description from the whole-class discussions reemerged in her conversation with Anthony. Anthony seemed to understand the point she was making and connected it to his own text.

**Transformation: How Did Anthony Make Sense of This Interaction?**

Although he did not directly refer to his teacher helping him with description in his piece, in an interview Anthony expressed how the conference made a deep impression on him. Anthony did not seem to take offense that the teacher was imposing her organizational structure on him. Instead, he found it helpful that she had written on his paper to aid him in thinking about how to include more description. He remarked that having a conference with his teacher was "like magic that she does to me."

Anthony explained his interaction with his teacher in the one-on-one conferences in this way:

> Oh it got me started again. . . . I got writer's block, yeah I got a block. (He demonstrates with tape holders, indicating his glasses as the "block," the cassette tape as his "writing," and the tape holder as the "teacher"). It's like um this thing, this is my writing and this is the block, all right I was writing, writing, writing, writing, the block was starting to fade away and then just when I was going to hit, it came back--

He then went on to explain that it was the teacher who had helped him "jump the block":

> She made me jump the block . . . she saved me, she, she um, like took the block and threw it away, like put it, or like put it away for a while and helped me on my writing.

It appears, then, that a connection between the teacher and Anthony occurred during this conference that had the potential to influence his subsequent thinking. What evidence do we see of reemergence of the emphasis upon imagery and description in Anthony's conference with a younger student and in his own text?

As will be demonstrated in the next section, Anthony adopted a very similar style of interaction to Meyer's with the younger student—a style that was quite didactic and task-oriented. Anthony was apparently influenced by the type of interaction from his own teacher-student conference as well as by the class discussions about qualities of good writing. By examining Anthony's conference with a first grader, Will, and by analyzing features of Anthony's text, we can infer what Anthony has internalized from the classroom dialogue, especially in relation to imagery and figurative language.

## Publication: What Has Anthony Internalized From the Classroom Dialogue?

### Anthony's Conference With Will

The writing conference between Anthony and Will, a first grader, took place at a desk in the hallway outside of Anthony's classroom during lunchtime. Sitting side by side, the two students hunched together over Will's text, with the tape recorder in between them. I provide a narrative of the conference to give the reader a sense of the sequence of talk/events.

The writing conference began by Will's reading of his coauthored book with another first grader named Alex. The first story he read was entitled "Mike's Adventure" about a boy who runs away from home after being yelled at by his father. The story continues through the boy's meeting of his brother and their adventures in Utah. After Will paused, Anthony responded, "That was a very good book, " to which Will said, "It's not over yet." Will finished reading this book and then immediately began to read his second story entitled "Indiana Jones and The Last Crusade" about Indiana Jones's adventures in Spain finding a treasure.

At the close of this story Anthony asked who Alex was, and Will explained that he was a boy in the class who had written the book with Will. Anthony then focused on the first piece indicating the beginning where Will had written that his father yelled at the character and asked Will, "What was that screaming about?" After Will explained that the character had done something bad with the result that his parents yelled at him and the boy decided to run away, Anthony asked whether the boy had really run away. Will responded that in the story the character did.

Anthony then raced back to his classroom to retrieve his entry notebook and showed it to Will. Anthony continued to refer to his own notebook at several different points in the conference and read several pieces from it, explaining to Will that description was important. Anthony then began to write on a separate piece of paper the beginning of Will's story, adding his own details to it. After adding some details, Anthony asked Will if he minded. Will tried to explain that he was going to add some pictures to the book, and then Anthony told Will that every book did not have pictures in it implying that Will should not worry about that.

Next Anthony flipped through his notebook and showed Will his "Post-its," self-stick notes that marked what he called "good words." After Anthony mentioned that the good words help the reader get a picture in their minds, Will began to tell Anthony about a book he had read, *The Karate Kid III*, to which Anthony responded by telling him about a book, *The Fox Mare*. When Will suggested he needed to go back up to his classroom, Anthony then asked him whether he had a computer to use for writing. Anthony used the paper containing his project-in-progress that had the words the teacher had written on it to show Will how he could add on to his own writing. When Will indicated that he wanted to draw a picture of Indiana Jones in his diary, Anthony began to write on the cover of Will's book, "retold and republished by Will." The conference then ended.

Because Anthony and Will were engaged in a lengthy talk about text in which Anthony had the opportunity to respond to Will's text and to teach Will about his own

writing, this conference provides an excellent opportunity to find out what ideas Anthony used that related to previous social interaction. We can trace several ideas of Anthony's back to the social interaction from the classroom. The most striking activity was that Anthony, without any prompting, went back into the classroom to get his own notebook to use as a reference and to illustrate the points that he made throughout the dialogue. This action suggests that not only did Anthony value his own notebook as important to him but that he also seemed to believe, as his teacher did, that it is through illustration of good writing that another writer could learn. In the portion of the dialogue that begins with turn 20, Anthony was trying to describe in a nutshell his own development as a writer through the pieces in his notebook. Anthony said

20. Anthony: This is, um, what I call, my entry notebook. It is a very large note book. It has many things that I would like you to hear. It starts out like this, this was my first entry I ever did. (He reads) "I remember when I was five years old and I used to water my mom's plants. And then she gave them a pot" and blah and blah and blah. It's like a diary, it goes on and on and on. Now, as I get deeper, into the notebook, like, if you were to take a piece of paper when your teacher's reading you a story, and do this, like this, (he takes a piece of paper and inserts it in his notebook) listen. (He reads) "I remember when I was five years old, and my, and my grandmother was dying and I heard a scream that filled the whole room up. And I, and gave me a chill down my spine." Do you know what a chill down my spine is?

In this turn of Anthony's, he demonstrated several features he had internalized from the classroom interaction: (a) the use of his own notebook as an example; and (b) the use of a placeholder (Post-its) to keep track of important lines and uses of description. Anthony had had several opportunities from the classroom interactions to internalize the activity of sharing his own notebook with a younger audience. Besides just the action of using his own notebook as an illustration, Anthony clearly seemed to value his own notebook and the sharing of his ideas with students.

**Content.** The most consistent topic that Anthony incorporated in his conference with Will was the idea of description. Anthony also included the necessity of giving readers a picture in their mind and the differences between notebooks and diaries, linking to the teacher's emphasis upon the use of imagery. Description was clearly a focus of Anthony's writing conference with Will. For instance, Anthony used the word describe, description,

or "good words" as synonyms seven times during the conference. In addition, during five different turns, Anthony gave examples from his own notebook of ideas that included the use of description. Using Will's story, Anthony also demonstrated how Will could elaborate and add interesting details. Turns 26 and 27 are particularly indicative of Anthony's emphasis upon description.

26. Anthony: That's what makes you have a chill down your spine// And um/ when/ and/ when you describe about that/ like, if you would/ you put/ you would say/ like/ my grand mother was/ I remember when I was five years old and my grand mother was dying// I heard a scream that whole/ the/ that/ I heard a scream// I went to her room/ like/ listen/ you don't describe/ that's the problem with the/ with some kids/ even my/even my age/ they don't describe// That is the major problem// And/

BREAK IN TAPE

27. Anthony: When you describe/ it helps you learn sometimes// Like when I wrote this/ (He reads) "My grandmother had an old crinkly face" /like/ you know when it's old and you can move your skin/ move your skin very well?/ And/ that "I kissed/ old/ had an old/ crisp/ crinkly face that I kissed// And when her wet lips hit my face like a drop of rain"// You understand like/ if you say/ my grandmother had an old crinkly face that I kissed// Blank// It would not/ like he had/ and (He reads) "her wet lips hit my face like a drop of rain//"

Even though Anthony struggled somewhat in his trying to give Will examples, he did succeed in using description in his examples. "Making you have a chill down your spine" is an example of what the teacher considered good language or including description. Anthony's inclusion of several adjectives such as "old," "crisp," and "crinkly" along with his comparison of wet lips to a drop of rain constitute examples of using "good words." Additionally, Anthony believed that description itself was important in writing, highlighted by his telling Will that that was a problem with some kids—they did not describe. Although Anthony did not tell Will how description helped him learn, Anthony did believe that description helped him.

Linked to his emphasis on description was Anthony's belief that diaries did not include description but only told a chronology of events. Turns 29 through 33 illustrate

Anthony's conception that diaries did not include description and told events. Here is Will and Anthony's interaction:

29. Anthony: Alright/ here/ (He reads) "I remember when I was five years old and I used to water my mommy's plants// And then she gave me a big hug/ And we would have a picnic in the park// And then we'd go to the carousel and meet my friend Sal and he would give me free rides/ and then I would climb on the rocks and I used to jump big distances and then go home//" Now that's actually like a diary/like you know/ if you start out like this/ woke up/ brushed my teeth/ uh/ woke up/ brushed my teeth/ looked at a little Nintendo--

30. Will: Yeah--

31. Anthony: Ate breakfast/ it's like a diary/ one thing and over the other/

32. Will: But you're not telling them about it/

33. Anthony: Yeah/ you're not describing anything// Now listen// When you're writing this book Indiana Jones/ this one/ whoa/ wait--

In this example, Anthony provided illustrations from his own notebook about what constituted a diary entry. Will seemed to have picked up on the distinction Anthony was making by agreeing that Anthony had not told the audience much about each event. Anthony not only seemed to have internalized the concept of description, but he was able to apply it to Will's story. This is one of several different points in the dialogue in which Anthony tried to get Will to elaborate upon his story. In his subsequent attempts to get Will to add more description, Anthony provided examples for him. In turns 52-58, Anthony showed Will what he should have done as an author:

52. Anthony: I know/ I know it says that/ but this is what I would have done// And then um/ and then on the next page/ you would write/ why you felt bad/ like/ because/ "because I have no reason to be"-- (Anthony writes and says this slowly.)

53. Will: Yelled at/

54. Anthony: Yelled at/

55. Will: But the reason I did that/ because/ I'm working with somebody/ and they did the first page/ so like/ they did the first page// I did the second page// They did pictures for that page// But what happens is/ as the story goes on/ like/ I wrote the pictures for this/ well/ as the story--

56. Anthony: You should really/ but listen// When/ and then I won't/ "I shouldn't be yelled at"// You know when you turn to the next page/ the next day/ is it the next--

57. Will: Well/ yeah/ it's like--

58. Anthony: "Next/ day/ when/ my/ mother/ and/ father/ were/ asleep/ I/ went/ very/ quietly/and/ and/ took/ my/ blanket/ and/ made/ a/ rope/ and/ and/ then/ ran,/ away//" Now that's what I would do// Now look// "The next day/when my mother and father were asleep/ I went very quietly and took my blanket and made a rope and then ran away from home//" (Anthony writes this on a separate piece of paper as he says this.)

Anthony seemed to become quite invested in having Will include description and greater detail, setting the stage for the character's running away. Indications of his investment are Anthony's overriding Will's explanation of what was written already and why. Anthony seemed to have valued description and adding detail to such an extent that he almost completely rewrote Will's story to include more detail.

As this conference illustrates, Anthony had internalized several features of the content of the social interaction of the classroom. The features of description, adding detail, and giving the reader a picture were apparent in Anthony's teaching of the younger student. Clearly these features were the focus of the classroom dialogue during the five weeks I observed. Sources in the classroom interaction for these features can be seen throughout the time, especially in the particular sessions in which literature was discussed. In these sessions the teacher discussed and provided examples from literature of the features of using beautiful language, description, adding detail, and getting a picture in one's mind. However, the teacher did not differentiate among the ideas, perhaps implying that they were all connected to one another and shared many features. They all seemed to fall under the teacher's image of using imagery and figurative language.

**Conversational style.** How did Anthony interact with Will during the writing conference? What strategies did Anthony use to talk to Will about his story? Anthony's style during the conference can be described as very didactic. Anthony took more

conversational turns (59) than did Will (57), but most striking is the length of Anthony's turns compared to Will's. Other than reading his two stories aloud, Will had to battle for the floor. Anthony often interrupted him and provided his own examples, giving lengthy descriptions of his own work.

Anthony interpreted his role in the conference as that of a traditional teacher who would ask questions about the story and provide information. In fact, most of Anthony's talk was filled with informative statements, although he used both elicitations and directives. Anthony was also very task-oriented, not asking personal information about Will but discussing only issues having to do with writing. Several sections of the conference are particularly illustrative of Anthony's interaction style with Will. At several points in the dialogue, Anthony told Will what he would have done if he were the author, indicating that Will should consider these:

50. Anthony: This is what I would have done// "It all started five days ago when my mommy yelled at me for no reason and I felt/ and I felt bad//"

51. Will: Is that the like--the like--

52. Anthony: I know/ I know it says that/ but this is what I would have done// And then um/and then on the next page/ you would write/ why you felt bad/ like/ because/ because I have no reason to be-- (Anthony writes and says this slowly.)

Anthony wrote on another piece of paper the ideas he thought Will should include on Will's next draft. The above excerpt is illustrative of Anthony's didactic style in which he actually demonstrated for the other student, showing him how to change his piece. Throughout the dialogue, Anthony was often directing Will's attention to the story or to his notebook by telling him to look or listen.

Anthony's own interaction with his teacher was apparently fresh in his mind both in terms of content and in terms of style of interaction. In the following excerpt, Anthony demonstrated his understanding of his interaction with his own teacher. Here he used a combination of strategies from directing Will to look at his notebook, to informing him about how his teacher had helped him, and adding his own interpretation of how words grow into sentences.

107. Anthony: Like when you start out/ look/ you could write this// My grandmother/ "My grandmother always wore loose clothes" and print more and more and stuff// Now/ when you're done with this/ you can take a sheet/ and as you see my teacher did this// Put description/ about this part/ and then she put stories/ all these stories together/ then she put pilon/ Pilon is that word// Then another thing/ the heights/ And we made a big thing out of it/ as you see/ it's big/ it starts out with one sentence/ then it goes to a word/ then it goes to a big/ to the whole paragraph/ and it gets even bigger// That's what happens in your writing/ you get corrupted// If you write a lot--

Much of the way Anthony interacted with Will reflected his own writing conference with Meyer. Many parallels especially in style are apparent. The most striking parallel is that both the teacher and Anthony dominated the discussion, providing many ideas and making strong recommendations. Their talk had a similar style in its didactic tone and emphasis.

**Anthony's Text**

Anthony internalized many of the aspects of "good writing" that had been discussed in class, especially in the features of imagery and figurative language. Anthony's internalization process can be traced through examining the development of his texts about his grandmother. Beginning on October 3 Anthony wrote seven entries in his notebook about his grandmother. He then used these pieces as the basis for his project. In his first entry about his grandmother Anthony wrote:

> I remember when I was 5 years old and my Grandmother was dying and I herd a scream. that filled the whole room and gave me a chill down my spine I went to her room and I huged she and took me By the shoulders and said I am going to die and we cried[5]

Beginning with this piece we can see how Anthony's text reflected already many of the aspects of "good writing" that Meyer discussed with students subsequently. Anthony drew upon a vivid memory of his own about his grandmother. Here he has included the features of using one's own personal experience and writing about something personal and

[5]Student writing is unedited and reproduced with original spelling and marks.

touching—the moment of death of his grandmother. He has focused on a particular moment and used figurative language, "herd a scream that filled the whole room and gave me a chill down my spine." The use of description was an aspect of text that Meyer valued and discussed in class.

Anthony's second entry about his grandmother again incorporated many of the features of narrative text that were valued by the teacher:

> My Grandmother was very nice She was old thank God I saw her because she always realy loved me--I mean realy loved me She used to play the pilion and I would play the drum and we used to go the Park and then have lunch and then go to the hights and get a ice that was called pidagua* (it's ice that is shaved from a block of ice and Put it in a cup and there are different flavors that you drink and first you put the ice in the cup then put the flavor and they give you a straw and you eat the ice and drink the flavor)*, and then I took the subway home and wen to the returant that I called the pop shop and I had some bacon and eggs went home to the house and went to bed.

In this piece Anthony again used many of the features that characterize the teacher's conception of good writing. He included a lengthy description about what a pidagua was, presumably for the reader to be able to picture it. Anthony ended the piece with a series of events—going home, having eggs, and going to bed—however, that were not valued by the teacher as examples of good writing. These events later disappeared from his subsequent revisions.

Anthony wrote other entries in his notebook that reflected this same emphasis upon the use of imagery and figurative language. For instance, in the October 10 piece about his grandmother, he wrote about a specific event, going to get Kentucky Fried Chicken with her, and later on underlined the line: "The oliy's Best spicest chicken I have ever tasted It was Good It filled my mouth with joy." Just as Anthony used description in this line, he also used imagery and figurative language in his October 30 piece, just before beginning his project. Here he wrote, "My grandmother was a very nice old Woman when I touched her crinkly face and she kissed my clean face and I kissed her back I felt like history just changed."

Subsequently, Anthony went back and highlighted this piece except for the last three words "history just changed"; these three words never appeared again in his project about is grandmother. Throughout Anthony's entries about his grandmother, he used the features of interweaving his personal experiences, revealing his feelings about her, and used

description and metaphor to communicate. Anthony appropriated the classroom dialogue and transformed it in a unique way to use in his piece about his grandmother.

Besides the inclusion of imagery, Anthony's final project reflected the interaction he had with his teacher in the writing conference on November 2. The focus of the conversation was about Anthony's organization of his pieces into a coherent whole and including more details. At home just previous to this conference, Anthony had word processed three entries from his notebook onto a new piece of paper. Two of the three entries were typed exactly as they appeared in the notebook while the third entry began in the same way but had a slightly different ending.

After the conference with the teacher, Anthony's project was revised several times. In his first revision directly after the conference, Anthony included a description of what his grandmother wore. This seemed directly tied to the interaction during the conference in which Ms. Meyer suggested that he should add details about what his grandmother wore. At her suggestion, Anthony began his piece with the following:

> Thank god I still remember what my grandmother looked like; She always wore loose clothes. She used to wear embroied [embroidered] flowers on her blue Gown. It was the best most buityful Dark Blue. More Blue than the sky. her shoes were black with a brown and a zig zag bottom. and when she walked it had a stutter like a man with a cane.

In his piece, Anthony has added a great deal of imagery as evidenced by his inclusion of many adjectives and his comparison of how she walked. There seemed to be a great deal of uptake on Anthony's part in relation to the use of description.

Anthony's final project reflected the organization that his teacher had suggested to him, even though it was different from the original organization he had told me he would use. The teacher had written "(1) description; (2) pilon, stories; and (3) heights." Anthony used the organization of first describing what his grandmother looked like, then describing the instrument that she used to play, and then included incidents of times he and his grandmother spent together on the "heights." He ended the piece with the scene in which he heard a scream and his grandmother died. We can see this organization by looking at his final piece:

My Grandmother Matilda

Thank god I still remember what my Grandmother looked like; she always wore loose cloths. She used to wear embroiderd flowers on her blue gown, bluer than the sky. It was the most Beautiful Dark Blue, more bluer than the sky. Her shoes were black with a Brown zig zag bottom; when she walked she limped like a man with a cane. Thank god I saw her because she always loved me I mean realy loved me. She used to play the pilion, a pilion is a kind of instrument that you pound and it makes a high piched ding that filled the whole niehborhood. I would play the drum and we would go to the park and have lunch and go to the hight's and have a ice that is called a piragua. (it's a ice that is shaved from a big block of ice and there are flavors that you have to pick and the ice is put into a cup and then the flavor in the cup and then you eat it and drink it.) When you go to 181st it gets noizy and people come gushing in to the streets and they put out there tables and start to sell. it's weird when we came home it's different. in the morning people dont come gushing into the streets and you cant get the mouth watering flavor of the air and the frut flys hitting your face like a mist of water. it's so poluted in new york so you cant sell or get a piragua. my grandmother took me to kentucky fried chicken. it was the most oily good chicken and I almost ate the whole thing and the room looked like a lot of pigs just ate the time of there life and they were right. I remember when I was 5 years old and my grandmother was dying and I herd a scream that filled the whole room and gave me a chill down my spine I went to her room and I kissed her and huged her and she took me by the sholders and said that she was going to die and she cryed. my grandmother always wanted to see me get old but she dyed to soon.

In his final project, Anthony has retained many of his original ideas that reflected aspects of "good writing" envisioned by the teacher. Additionally, he incorporated his teacher's suggestions at an organizational structure and told me that his teacher's suggestions "made more sense."

**What Is Significant About Anthony's Internalization Process?**

Why did Anthony seem so successful at internalizing the classroom interactions? The content of the classroom dialogue can not be separated from the norms of interaction during writing time. Anthony was not only able to understand the content of the discussions about qualities of good writing including description, but he also understood the underlying rules of interaction between the teacher and student and among students. Anthony not only contributed to group discussions, but when he did, his ideas were valued by the teacher and

students and these ideas then became part of the ongoing discourse. In other words, there was uptake of Anthony's ideas in the group setting.

Anthony and his teacher were in synchrony in terms of their styles of interaction. The teacher-student writing conference provides a microcosm to view the ways in which Meyer and Anthony's styles matched. This match between teacher and student contributed to Anthony's success. Anthony was able to understand and match his writing to the teacher's notion of good writing, perhaps in part because his existing background knowledge about text already shared features with the teacher's image of a successful text. In the case of Anita, we see something quite different.

## *The Case of Anita*

### Opportunities for Appropriation: Social Interaction During Writing Time

**Anita's Class Participation**

Anita did not contribute to classroom discussions. In the 17 classroom lessons observed, Anita never made a single oral contribution. She did not give ideas, nor did she read anything she had written to the whole group. She was virtually silent during whole-group sessions. However, she wrote at the designated times when the whole group was writing on the rug.

At her table, Anita often wrote during the designated writing time, but she also spent time not engaged in writing. During this "off-task" time, Anita talked to the girls at her table, had disagreements with boys at her table, and passed notes or engaged in activities unrelated to her notebook. These actions seemed to occur more frequently during the last two weeks when students were working on projects, rather than the first three weeks in which students were writing in their notebooks. Anita, however, reported that she shared her writing with the people at her table when they were not passing notes or "talking about boys."

Anita had conflicting feelings about sharing her writing with both adults and students. In an interview Anita revealed that she did not like to share her writing with the whole class and would only read if the teacher made her read aloud. She also said that she did not like to share her writing with the teacher and that the teacher "never" talked to her:

> I don't want her [the teacher] to. I just don't want her to. I don't want her to talk to me at all. She yells at people too much . . . especially me. . . . She never does [talk to me] so why should I want her to?

Anita seemed to have conflicting feeling about sharing her writing with others. While not wanting to share with the whole class nor the teacher, she was willing to read some of her work to students at her table. She often sought out visitors to listen to her work, but then said she did not like to read her pieces to visitors because they brought in their own lives too much and did not listen to hers. Anita seemed to have difficulty finding her place in the classroom organization and did not seem to feel valued and accepted, except by a small group of peers at her table. What opportunities, then, did Anita have to participate in the classroom discourse?

**Teacher-Student Writing Conference**

Because Anita rarely interacted in the whole-group sessions and because the events occurring after the conference were so significant, the individual teacher-student conference is an important source of information about Anita's relationship with the teacher. During the five weeks of observation, Anita had only one occasion to talk to the teacher in an individual writing conference.

On this day, October 29, Meyer had discussed with the class the process of turning notebook entries into projects. Just prior to the conference with Anita, she had held conferences with several other students. The following conference occurred in the rug area. Ms. Meyer sat with her back against the cupboards, had just completed a conference with a boy, and called Anita to sit by her. Anita sat about four feet away from her. At the beginning of the conference teacher and student made eye contact with one another. Meyer started off the conference in this way:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | T: | OK Anita// what do you think? My god/ for somebody who has such an incredible notebook/ it should be easy for you to find a project// |
| 2. | Anita: | I was thinking about using my Lenox camp/ |
| 3. | T: | Come here/ (motioning for her to come closer.) Mmhmm// And what do you think you would do? Do you think that out of all these entries that one is the most important for you?/ Why?/ |
| 4. | Anita: | Because it was really fun/ We had about twenty minutes to play around/ going in the bathroom-- |
| 5. | T: | Uh huh-- |

6. Anita: All of that--

In this opening part, the teacher started off by complimenting Anita, suggesting she had an interesting notebook. This is a common opening that teachers familiar with the Writing Project often use. They try to get the student comfortable talking by making a general comment about the student's work. As soon as Anita suggested that she wanted to write about Lenox Hill Camp, however, Meyer already implied some disapproval by her emphasis on *all*, *that*, and *important*. Her question about was that the entry the most important and her tone implied that she did not think this was a good topic. When Anita continued and explained that she wanted to write about it because it was fun, Meyer changed the topic to ask what kind of piece would it be, asking what genre or form the piece should take. The section of the conference concerned with genre took this form:

7. T: So you think that is the thing you really want to write about?/ And what would it be? What kind of piece would it be?/

8. Anita: It could be a poem/

9. T: A poem?// You would turn that entry into a poem?/ That would be interesting/

10. Anita: Yeah/ A story/

11. T: Well/ A story?/ What kind of story?/ You mean like a story about one specific time in your life that was so important/ Think about it// Why do you think that one time of being away is so important?/

After the brief exploration of genre, Meyer brought the conference back to the issue of what Anita should write about by suggesting that she write about something "important." Meyer then tried to get at the issue of what was important by asking Anita why it was important. The implicit message at his point seems to be that having fun at Lenox Hill Camp was not "important" enough to pursue further.

The nonverbal actions during this activity were also informative about the teacher-student interaction. Meyer took the notebook from Anita almost immediately and kept it in front of her, holding it through most of the conference. When Anita began talking about what she did at Lenox Hill Camp, Meyer began to engage in a series of nervous gestures. She brushed her face with her hand, then scratched her face. Then she began

thumbing through the notebook as Anita explained what she had done at camp. Meyer then scratched her nose, took a piece of hair and brushed it behind her ear. During the next series of questions and statements, Meyer alternated between looking at Anita and looking through the notebook. Once she looked away from Anita and the notebook to look at the class. While Anita was talking, Meyer scratched her nose, nodded slightly, and scratched her chin.

The dialogue during this time focused on the events at Lenox Hill Camp. Meyer asked a question and offered her own interpretation of why Anita liked camp, then Anita disagreed without overtly contradicting her by saying "not really" twice. Turns 12 through 28 show how Meyer seemed to be offering her own interpretations in her search to suggest something else besides Lenox Hill Camp for Anita to write about. Meantime, Anita tried to explain her own feelings about camp while answering the teacher's questions:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 12. | Anita: | I never missed my mother so much/ |
| 13. | T: | Ahhh// And you thought it was really neat to miss your mother/ You liked it because you missed your mother? |
| 14. | Anita: | Not really/ I liked it because it was a lot of fun/ We got a free telescope and time with your friends and your class-- |
| 15. | T: | Uh huh-- |
| 16. | Anita: | And time with your teacher/ |
| 17. | T: | Ahhh/ so you liked spending time with your teacher?-- |
| 18. | Anita: | Not really/ Not everybody did/ |
| 19. | T: | Not everybody liked spending time with their teacher so you didn't like spending time with your teacher?/ |
| 20. | Anita: | Yeah/ I did/ I was running around with the daughter-- |
| 21. | T: | Uh huh uh huh-- |
| 22. | Anita: | The daughter kept going back and forth/ back and forth to her mother- |
| 23. | T: | Uh huh-- |

24. Anita: And her daughter and I/ we/ I was running/ we were playing tag/ and I was running to catch her/ and/ I fell in this little hole in the ground/ and so I called her back/ I forgot her name and I called her back/ and/ and I told her about it and she said/ let's make something so every time people try to run past here--

25. T: Mhmmm--

26. Anita: They just fall in this hole--

27. T: Mhmmm--

28. Anita: We both made it bigger/

Meyer and Anita did not ever seem to connect in this portion of the dialogue. First, Meyer seemed to want to get Anita to get to the "important part" of camp. She suggested that it might be missing her mother that was important to Anita, then suggested perhaps it was the time that she spent with her teacher that was important. However, Anita seemed to think it was having fun and participating in the events at camp such as running around with the teacher's daughter, playing tag, and falling in holes that was "important." The teacher and student had quite different ideas about what "important " meant. Although the pronoun "it" is used interchangeably with camp, what is important about "it" was not shared by the teacher and the student. On the one hand, Anita believed that what was important about camp was the enjoyable time she had participating in activities. In contrast, Meyer seemed to believe that what was important about "it" was the experience of being at camp, away from home. Meyer was hurrying Anita along to get to what was "important," while Anita prolonged the details of camp and what she enjoyed about the experience which seemed to be having fun.

The lack of shared agenda was also manifested in their body language. While Meyer was distracted and scratched her face and played with her hair, Anita smiled, looked at the teacher, and used gestures when she was describing the incidents at camp. However, when Meyer asked questions about what was "important," Anita looked at the rug but never directly at the teacher. Both the dialogue and the gestures indicate a lack of shared agenda.

Meyer shifted the conversation and again gained control over it in the next section. She effectively cut off Anita's stories about camp by saying, "It is so interesting." The next part of the conference is presented here:

29. T: It is so interesting/ Anita/ that you you talk about writing that because there are so many entries/ when I look through this/ I would have thought that the thing that would have stood out to you most would have been about your *father*// You have so many entries about your *father* in here// (She reads from text slowly with feeling) "When I was living in Jamaica I had a farm/ We had chickens and my *father* has something like/ an idea to let the chickens"//

30. Anita: Lay eggs--

31. T: "Lay eggs and sell them/" I mean/ I could just see this becoming/ all the like/ you know/ either the good times/You had a lot of good times and a lot of bad times with your father/ right?

32. Anita: Yeah/

33. T: You know/ It seems to me that/ you have all these entries about the good and the bad times about your father and maybe you should just pick one// You know I'm not trying to tell you what to do/ you know but it seems to me that you have more important stuff in here than/ Lenox Hill camp// You know what I mean?// Unless you don't really want to write about it/ Do you have other good entries about your father here besides this one?//

34. Anita: Not really//

[They look through the notebook together. Anita puts her hands on notebook and is trying to flip pages.]

35. Anita: That is the first day of school when Nick was bothering me/

36. T: Mhmmm (long pause) So many of your entries have to do with your father--

37. Anita: This is about/ that's the same thing/

38. T: Mhmmm//

39. Anita: I have another/ not good/ but bad thing about my father/

40. T: Mhmmm// (Teacher reads) "My father"/

41. Anita: That is one of the bad things he did/

42. T: Mhmmm/

43. Anita: That is another thing about the maid/

44. T: Mhmmm/

During this portion of the conference the teacher read a line aloud, traced lines with the eraser tip of her pencil, and alternated looking at Anita with looking at the notebook. Several times Anita put her hand on her notebook which was still on the teacher's lap and flipped slowly through the book pointing out specific entries. As soon as the teacher mentioned the entries about her father, Anita's shoulders stiffened and she looked at the ground. After this point, the teacher and student never made eye contact; they would look at one another but not at the same time.

Anita had pointed out several entries in her notebook that seemed to be of interest to her. However, Meyer did not follow up on any of those. Instead, she continued to come back to the issue of Anita's father, pointing out how many entries there were. Even though Meyer said she was not telling Anita what to write about, the implicit message was that her father was an important issue in her life and Anita should write about him. Meyer's numerous "mhmmms" suggest a lack of interest in what Anita had said and suggest that she was anxious to get Anita off of other subjects and onto discussing her father. Anita's responses seem to be a mixture of compliance and resistance.

For instance, her "not really" in response to Meyer's question about were there other "good entries" about her father suggests that Anita was not interested in finding other entries about her father. Instead, she pointed out examples of different topics she had written about. When Meyer brought up her father yet another time, Anita complied with the requests by showing the teacher other entries about her father. However, Anita continued to point out the "bad things."

The last segment of the conference shows how Meyer took control over the conference, providing little opportunity for Anita to respond. This is signified by Meyer's lengthy turns and her suggestions that Anita find something else in the notebook to write about. The teacher's underlying message was that Anita should not write about Lenox Hill Camp because it is not really "important" or that there is more to the experience of Lenox Hill Camp than just having a good time. The conference ended in this way:

45. T: Mhmmm/ I don't know// (long pause) I think you need to think// I think you really need to go through this book/ right? /Really go through this book really carefully and read it very carefully/ And take another color pen/ OK/ and underline/ all the sentences in your book/ all of the places in your book where you think you wrote something so beautifully and that it was so important for you/ OK?/ Because I think/ Anita that you have really really deep and important things/ to say/ about relationships and about your mother and your father and I just don't think /that Lenox Hill/ is the most important thing for you in here// If you decide that that is what you want to do/ OK/ If it turns that after this you can't find/ some big important idea that comes out of this for you that you would like to write about/ Maybe it's going to be wishing/you know/ that your father were different/ that you could have more good times like the time in Jamaica// Maybe you could really really write up that time in Jamaica because that was a really good time/ wasn't it?//

46. Anita: (no audible response)

47. T: Right/ Can you describe what Jamaica looked like/ and /what it was like being there with your father/ and you know the good times// Maybe for you it's kind of like wishing there were more of those good times/ Are you in touch with your father? Do you know--

48. Anita: All I know is that he is living at my grandmother's/

49. T: Do you know where to write to him? I mean maybe--

50. Anita: My mother knows her address/

51. T: Maybe you could write a nice letter to him/ "Dear dad/ I remember Jamaica"/ and you know you could write this whole beautiful thing about Jamaica/ and "I wish we could have more times like that"/ You know/ Maybe that is something you would like to do as a way of contacting your father// you know/ I mean that is a thought/ You think about it/ I don't want to/ you know/ you decide what you think you want to do// Because somehow with all this important stuff/ you know/ I am wondering/ whether Lenox Hill Camp/ is really important to you /and if it is/ then you have to decide why it was so important to you/ OK?/ Maybe it is more important than just

because you had a good time/ maybe there is more stuff there than just you had a good time/

52. Anita: Because I never left my mother for that long--

53. T: Uh huh--

54. Anita: About two weeks or one/

55. T: No/ you were gone for one week/ like for four days/ that's how long Lenox Hill Camp is// And you think you just had to take care of yourself for the first time and that was why it was so important?/

56. Anita: Yeah/

57. T: Maybe that is what you need to think about/ why Lenox Hill Camp was so important because you did all these things on your own and you never did before// And rather than telling about first I jumped off the log and then I did this and then I did this/

[Teacher talks to student across the room.]

58. T: So think about that and then come back to me if you need some more help// All right?/ Think long and hard//

At this point Anita got up and left the rug as Ms. Meyer handed her her notebook.

At the end of the conference Ms. Meyer was still pushing Anita to write about her father or to find something "important" about Lenox Hill Camp. Anita seemed to try to find a topic within Lenox Hill Camp that might satisfy the teacher. For instance, she suggested that she had never left her mother for such a long period of time. Meyer immediately, but subtly, undermined Anita's attempts by telling her that she was wrong about the period of time that camp lasted. The teacher continued her pursuit of finding an "important" issue such as doing things on her own. Having fun and describing in narrative form seemed inappropriate for a project in Meyer's view.

As evidenced by their body language and their dialogue, teacher and student never found a place to connect during this conference. They shared neither the same physical space, the same agenda, nor the same conception of good writing. How did Anita make sense of this interaction? What effect did the conference have on her and her subsequent

interactions and texts? The next section describes Anita's impressions and explains subsequent events that bear on what she actually internalized.

**Transformation: How Did Anita Make Sense of This Interaction?**

After Anita's conference with her teacher, I was curious to get Anita's viewpoint of the interaction. I had noticed that the issue of her father had come up and that the teacher seemed to want her to write about this. When I asked her about how the conference had gone, Anita responded that the teacher had told her "how nice my book is to read and how many things in there I have written about my father." When I asked her how she felt about that, Anita answered, "I hate my father a lot. Would you want to be his daughter if he hit you with hot wires?" Anita then pointed to two girls saying "they knew" and then leaned down to tell me an example of physical abuse by her father.

I tried to continue our conversation by acknowledging the difficulty of her situation and asking her about her writing. She reported that "everything in here [her notebook] is confusing" and said that she did not know what to write about. Her interpretation of the conference was that the teacher wanted her to go through her notebook and find some "good entries" about her father. However, she stated that she did not have to write about her father if she did not want to. At this point Anita got giggly and started acting nervous, stretching out against the chair and looking away. Then she told me that she would write about her grandfather because he was the nicest person in her family who had done a lot of nice things for her.

**Publication: What Has Anita Internalized From the Classroom Dialogue?**

**Writing Conference With Ginny**

Anita conducted a writing conference with a first grader, Ginny, in a small room. They both sat at a table and the conference started off by Ginny reading her piece about an adventure. In this story Ginny wrote that she and a friend, Will, were sitting on the front porch when another character, Danielle, came along and ruined everything. The adventure continued with the three children going to the playground, falling into a hole, and ending up in a graveyard where they were lost. After more adventures, the characters went home. Ginny's story was written in magic marker on construction paper using invented spelling. Ginny's text contained a combination of words spelled in conventional ways such as "man," "we," "were," and "yard" and many words such as "went," "grave," and "found" that were spelled in less conventional or invented ways.

After Ginny read the story to Anita, Anita said, "That is good, Gin. All you need go do is put the words [inaudible] and make your handwriting a little better." After asking Ginny if she had written the story herself and suggesting that one page should be the cover of the book, Anita proceeded to help Ginny with the spelling.

**Content**. Almost the entire focus of the conference was on spelling with one small section on correcting a grammatical mistake. In the over 200 exchanges the two girls had during the conference, almost all of the turns centered around fixing the spelling or adding periods. Turns 48-72 demonstrate Anita's focus on spelling and grammar:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 48. | Anita: | Well Will /Just use those/ Will/ you put a comma/ period/ whatever/ comma/ |
| 49. | Ginny: | Put-- |
| 50. | Anita: | Danielle/ |
| 51. | Ginny: | Danielle/ |
| 52. | Anita: | Danielle and I/ |
| 53. | Anita: | Will/ yes I/ Not me/ I// |
| 54. | Ginny: | Danielle and-- |
| 55. | Anita: | And I/ Danielle-- |
| 56. | Ginny: | And I? |
| 57. | Anita: | I makes much more sense than me/ Who wrote Danielle and me? Okay/ Let's fix up some of the words you have in here// |
| 58. | Ginny: | Okay/ |
| 59. | Anita: | Me and Will were-- |
| 60. | Ginny: | Talk-- |
| 61. | Anita: | Ah ha/ |
| 62. | Ginny: | Were on the front porch talking-- |
| 63. | Anita: | Will/ And/ I/ W-E-R-E/ |

64. Ginny: Were talking/ On the front porch//

65. Anita: On the front, F-R-O-U-N-T/ F-R-O-U-N-T// Front, por-- P-O-R-E/

66. Ginny: Okay/

67. Anita: What's that?/

68. Ginny: Talking/

69. Anita: Will and I were on the front porch talking// T-A-L-K-I-N-G// Just turn it around it around. I-N/ Will and I were/ U-R-E/ um/

70. Ginny: Why is that wrong?

71. Anita: Well/ N-T// P-O-R-T/ P-R-E/ front porch/ T-A-L-K-I-N-G// Talking/ Will and I were on the front porch talking//

72. Ginny: Talking//

This focus on mechanics characterized the entirety of the conference except for three departures into nontext related discussions—one about Anita's t-shirt, one about whether Ginny had eaten lunch yet, and a final one about the tape recorder. Generally in the conference Anita would point out places where Ginny should add a period or cross a "T." Ginny would often say the word and then Anita would write it in tiny letters over Ginny's word. Anita then wrote the story all over on a separate piece of paper using her own "invented spelling." On the back of this paper, Anita made two lists using the red dividing line of the paper:

words for Jenny to spell

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| adventure | | |
| with | wall | |
| frount | | well |
| porture | | Will, Danyal and I |
| talking | | will and I |
| She | were. | |
| ronead [ruined] | | |
| ever thing | | |

The list as well as the conversation provides clues about what may have been going on with Anita. How does this conference with Ginny link back to the classroom interaction? This list seems to resemble school-like lists with rows of words that a student should practice and memorize, yet this is not a task in which Meyer had ever engaged students. Not once in the four weeks preceding this student-student conference did Meyer refer to mechanics or grammar. Instead, Meyer's focus was on use of imagery and figurative language. Mechanics did not enter into the discussions at all until the last week after the student-student conferences.

**Conversational style.** The style of this conference resembles traditional teacher-student roles. Anita was quite didactic in her style, suggesting to Ginny what she should change. Her tone was gentle, while authoritative. Some parallels exist between the teacher's authoritativeness and Anita's. Although the teacher-student conference seemed to be filled with implicit messages, the teacher's tone had been on the surface gentle and supportive.

**What Is Significant About Anita's Internalization Process?**

In Anita's conference with Ginny, we have no evidence that she internalized what had occurred in the classroom dialogue concerning description and use of figurative language. Instead, Anita's focus was on spelling and punctuation. Why might this be the case? Several explanations are plausible for Anita's seeming lack of uptake of the classroom discourse. One explanation is that because Anita did not participate orally in the discussions, she was not attending to the discussions and thus had little opportunity to understand and use the concepts. A competing explanation is that Anita understood what was occurring in the classroom but actively resisted the content. Because there was little rapport with the teacher and because Anita felt alienated, she chose not to use the ideas that were presented in class as an act of resistance. Yet another possible explanation is that Anita was responding to the constraints of the text that Ginny presented to her. Because Ginny's text was filled with invented spelling and words that were difficult to decode, even after Ginny read it to her, Anita may have been responding to the text itself. Anita's list of words to spell correctly is indicative of Anita's orientation to the teaching task itself and her experience with previous schooling.

Anita may have seen herself in a more traditional teacher role whose job it was to impart knowledge about correct spelling and grammar and to provide an opportunity for Ginny to practice the correct spelling. Further evidence that Anita may have constructed the teaching task in a traditional way is that in two instances Anita asked Ginny, "Am I boring you?" The questions may have been related to Anita's understanding that school is

about doing many spelling tasks and being bored by them. Which of these explanations seems to be the most compelling? Evidence from other areas of Anita's work may help answer the question.

**Anita's Text**

Anita's texts may be indicative of what she did or did not internalize from the classroom dialogue. Her texts also suggest the kind of match that she had with the teacher's conception of "good writing." In the piece that Anita spent over two weeks writing, we can see certain features that seem to characterize her narrative style and compare it to the teacher's vision of a good narrative. The following is the story Anita wrote about her experiences at Lenox Hill Camp. This is the piece from her notebook that she wanted to use for her project, but was discouraged from using by the teacher.

> My teacher was saying something and I remember the time when my old class went to Lenox Hill camp we had a lot of fun My bus was the first bus to leave a couple of us was in the bus I'll name the people. Ophelia, Cindy, Jasmin, bosise, Micle, Antony, marcus, patric, Joey, and me our bus was the first to leave After that the other bus came The teacher disided to pick out the rooms for girls and boys We were in scode [squad] one and the other class was in scoude two well [while] the girls were less [last]. what I mean was that there were less girls. The scond [second] day that we were there the boys were Trying to come in our room. and then we plade [played] a game, spin the botle. it was a realy bad game. I'll tell you how it gose you take a botle and spin it and if it lands on a girl, then they have to wate [wait] and then you spin it agian and if it points at a boy, the girl and the boy have to go in the colset and do something and if you don't you get a slap so when I went in the closet with the boy we acted like we were doing something But we were not and I put spit all over my mouth and came out of there and they said Had fun I was like yes I had a lot of fun. and then our class introctor [instructor] came and brought us outside and we went on the seld [sled] and hade a lot of fun we went down a little hill and went on the seld and then my friend Ophlea and I were talking [taking] some ice out of the water. it was winter. It was realy cool and it was the Bigest piece of ice you ever seen. I Loved Lonx hill camp. it was like we went hikeing and I wore my water baiters [boots] and it had a hole in it and my feet were frezing so much you could do me thing [something] with it. Well then that night my teacher read us a horrour story and I got real Scared and then I could hardly sleep and one Time we aske the teacher to get a drink of water. She looked kind of wear [weird]. When she said yes, I saw some smoke come out of her mouth. I was really sick. I was so scared that the, that she might be smoking crack because she was like acting like strange all the time. Every morning and every day

> every morning and everybody is like was she really smoking at my table the ones that were in my group and maybe a litle and the next day maybe a litle The next day we had to go hiking so we went we learned about foot tracks, animals I don't remember how the squirel looked and anyway we went on the bridge blindfold and my friend Jasmin was Ok when I did her and when she did me I almost fell off she was so dumb. we went back to the camp it was fun Fun. we went on the hike but I got really scared because she put me at the edge of the bridge I was like get this thing off of me and I almost throw up on her. So I took off the blindfold and I was at the edge of the bridge. She was very careless. She put me at the edge of the bridge.

What characteristics of the teacher's conception of "good writing" are evident in Anita's piece about Lenox Hill Camp? Although Anita wrote the piece in the first person and told me that these experiences had happened to her, this piece does not include an emotional response about the event. Anita states it was fun and in subsequent interviews indicated that her experience at the camp was one of the best times in her life. From the teacher's point of view, there may have been no personal conflict described in the story. There is no "real issue" or anything that is personally revealing in Anita's piece. Instead, Anita described a series of events that were connected by occurring at Lenox Hill Camp.

In an interview, Meyer expressed her view of how she had hoped that Anita would write about something that seemed "important" to her such as her father instead of writing about these series of events from Camp:

> I wanted her to try to see what was the bottom, what was the bottom of all this, you know what I mean, all these horrible pieces that she has, all these bad luck things. . . . I was hoping that she would um, you know she's got all of these horrible stories [about her father abusing her.] And I didn't want to let her do that [write about Lenox Hill Camp] because that would have been just one of those you know, I went to great adventure kind of things, I had a lot of fun, I hid in the woods.

Meyer had suggested that Anita's story lacked getting to "the bottom" of something which seems to mean for the author to figure out why something occurred or what difference that event made in her life. Getting to the bottom of something seems to entail being reflective about an event or person and describing its emotional impact. In contrast, writing about Lenox Hill Camp is of the "great adventure" genre which lacks emotional impact and focus.

In terms of language and style, Anita had used very little imagery or figurative language. For instance, given the length of the piece there are relatively few adjectives that might "give the reader a picture in his mind." Anita had not used any similes, metaphors, or comparisons of any type. In Anita's piece we do not see any of the reemergence of ideas such as figurative language that were introduced during the whole group sessions.

Additionally, the structure of this piece does not match Ms. Meyer's image of "good writing." Instead of focusing on one small event within the overall experience at Lenox Hill Camp, Anita had chosen to write about the entire trip. There is no overall explicit point of the story or thematic focus. Events are not linked to an overall theme but instead are linked with the event just prior in time. For instance, she went from playing spin the bottle to sledding with the instructor to getting a piece of ice. The sequence of events seems to be linked temporally in Anita's mind with the thematic focus on "it was fun." Although there is an overarching topic—Lenox Hill Camp—there is no dramatic theme.

Although Anita's text does not seem to match the teacher's image of a good text, her text contains many interesting features. The most striking feature is that her text resembles "an oral text." It was not necessarily meant to be read as a written text. Instead, imagine Anita telling this story to a group of peers who might share the same frame of reference or discourse style and who might be quite appreciative of the dramatic effect that she could create through her voice and the retelling of several dramatic incidents.

What is the evidence that this might read like an oral text? First, Anita connected her story with several "ands" and "thens" throughout the story, especially as she got further into it. This is a feature of text often found in adults' and children's oral storytelling. Second, Anita used explanatory features in her text reminiscent of oral texts. For instance, she wrote "well the girls were less. what I mean was that there were less girls." This is the kind of data a storyteller might include orally to provide an immediate explanation. Additionally, Anita added conversational features such as "I don't remember how the squirrel looked and anyway." It is as if she were telling the audience, "by the way you might be wondering how the squirrel looked, but I don't remember." Also the use of "anyway" is another connective term often used in oral discourse, but less prevalent in standard English written prose.

Although Anita's text may not have an explicit point, it does contain several dramatic points or points of tension. For instance, the explanations of what happened in the closet with spin the bottle, the tension around whether the instructor at the camp had smoked crack, and the ending telling about the incident on the bridge were subplots in her narrative. The story has a structure of its own, but this structure does not fit into the teacher's

conception of what makes for a well-organized piece. Instead, Anita's piece has much in common with Michaels's (1981) analysis of African-American girls' topic-association structure of telling stories during "sharing time."

**Why Don't We See Internalization in Anita's Talk and Text?**

In neither Anita's piece about Lenox Hill Camp nor in her writing conference with Ginny do we see evidence of reemergence of the dialogue. Instead, the text that she constructed did not include imagery or figurative language. The writing conference with the first grader, Ginny, contains no references to figurative language. Instead, the text uses an oral format and the conference focuses on mechanics and grammar. Why might this be the case?

Several factors seem to have influenced Anita's actions and thinking. Anita's own personal/cultural values and her relationship with the teacher as evidenced in general classroom interactions as well as the writing conference provide clues to understanding why Anita did not use imagery and figurative language. These factors also link to the series of compromises that Anita made in subsequent constructions of text.

First, Anita may come from a background in which the teacher's use of traditional literary figrative language and metaphor are not part of the culture.[6] As we see from her text, Anita did not seem to have much experience with traditional literary devices primarily associated with forms of 19th- and early 20th-century European and Euro-American realistic fiction which still dominate "middle brow" literature and children's novels. It may be the case that she has had little experience with this mode of narrative tradition, but may have more exposure to other forms of narrative through television, picture books, or oral storytelling. If she comes from a strong narrative tradition that uses other constructions of word play, it may be even more difficult for her to adjust to the Euro-realistic style, especially if the teacher assumes that this is the only appropriate form (Singer, 1991, personal communication). We do not see indications of signifying in her written text either, but that may be because that form of metaphor is primarily used in oral texts, not written texts.

In the interviews with me, Anita did not connect to or respond to my probes about "beautiful language." In contrast, in responding to pieces or explaining what she liked about certain texts, Anita focused on the topic and events. She resisted giving any examples of

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[6]Note for instance the work of Carol Lee (1991) in an American Educational Research Association address about the use by some African-Americans of figurative language in discourse called "signifying" of which "yo mama so skinny, she do hoola hoop in a apple jack" would be an example.

imagery and did not use examples of description as indicators of good texts. Instead, she explained her choice of texts in terms of the value of the topic and her personal relationship to the person or event. For instance, she explained that what was good about her writing about Nick on the first day of school was the fact that he was a person who "bugged" her and that she did not like him. When probed about her reason for liking the initial piece about her grandfather, she remarked that it was because he had loved her. She decided to write about this because another girl in the class had written about her grandmother which reminded Anita of her grandfather.

When I asked Anita questions about herself or her writing, she often answered them by telling a story about something that had happened to her. Instead of expressing her feelings directly about the teacher or classroom (as I had expected her to), Anita often answered by telling a story. She almost never answered questions about description except by saying, "I don't know." Description simply seemed beside the point of what Anita considered to be a good text.

Second, Anita's shaky relationship with the teacher may have contributed to or been the result of their lack of connection over Anita's text. The teacher explained in an interview that she did not like Anita. Likewise, Anita felt conflicted about whether she wanted the teacher to talk to her or not. As evidenced by the conference with the teacher, Anita's concept of text and the topic she wrote about did not match the teacher's image of a good text. During the course of the writing conference, Meyer never looked at Anita's story on Lenox Hill Camp, although presumably she had looked at it on a previous occasion. The conversation was never really about Anita's text or topic. Instead, the conference revolved around finding an alternative topic about which to write. The implicit messages to Anita were most likely that the text she wrote was not valued and that it was better to write about something "important" such as her father, even if that meant writing about a painful relationship. Anita, then, was faced with a difficult dilemma: How could she please the teacher and yet still write about something that would not cause her pain?

Anita's response to this situation was to compromise. Instead of pursuing her piece on Lenox Hill Camp from her notebook, which was clearly not valued by the teacher, Anita chose to write about her grandfather for her final project. Writing about her grandfather seemed to fulfill several of the implicit criteria held by the teacher. First, she chose a poetic form instead of a narrative. The teacher had given two clues that a poetic form might be valued. In the conference when Anita had suggested writing a poem, Meyer had said in a noncommittal way, "that would be interesting." Also, Meyer suggested that rather than

telling about events, Anita should get to what was "important," thereby suggesting that a narrative of events was not the correct format for a project.

The second indication of compromise was Anita's choice of topic—writing about her grandfather. This choice of topic fulfilled the implicit criterion of writing about something "important" which for Meyer seemed to be linked to writing about a relative or a personal incident such as a relationship. By writing about her grandfather, Anita could avoid bringing up painful memories about her father and sharing incidents that may have been forbidden by her own cultural or family norms. Yet, Anita could still satisfy the teacher's need for writing about something personal and perhaps her own need to write about something "good " that happened in her life.

Anita's final project expressed not only a compromise with the teacher's expectations, but showed some evidence of "internalization" of the classroom dialogue. In the following poem, Anita used some of the ideas that were part of the classroom discourse.

The Poem about My Grandfather

The sun shines bright
The plums smell sweet
The birds fly high
and my Grandfather is nice Just like
you see, Grandpa! Grandpa! I'll never leave
you, Grandpa! Grandpa! I miss you so much
Grandpa! Grandpa! Come back to me and
I'll come back to you, Grandpa! Grandpa!
I'll heare you in my hart! You are Sweet
like a plum and you are nice like a bIRD
I'll keep you in my hart tonight and
let the stars shine so bright

I MISS you
GrandpA

In this poem, Anita has used some descriptive words such as "bright" and "sweet." Additionally, she included comparisons such as "You are sweet like a plum and you are nice like a bird." This seems to be the type of language that Anita thought the teacher wanted and expected. Whether or not Anita had "internalized" the use of imagery and figurative language for use in subsequent texts, or whether she herself valued it and transformed it to make it her own in other settings, is left open to question. What seems to have occurred is that Anita had gone through a process of writing a text consistent with her own beliefs

about a good narrative—the Lenox Hill Camp piece, had interactions with her teacher in which her text was not valued or taken up in the public domain, and then tried to match the teacher's image of good writing through the production of a new text—the poem.

We can view Anita's conference with Ginny in a similar way—as another example of a compromise. Because she either did not know how to help another student use imagery and figurative language or because she did not choose to use these features, Anita resorted to discussing mechanics in her writing conference with Ginny. Discussing mechanics may have been a way to please her teacher by engaging in the type of talk that she thought was appropriate for talking about text in school—focusing on mechanics. No doubt previous school norms played a large part in Anita's focus on mechanics and dominated the current classroom discourse. However, it may be that the previous norms were predominant because Anita felt alienated in her current classroom situation.

### *Discussion*

The cases of Anthony and Anita contrast sharply with one another. Anthony provides an example of a student in which the internalization process is clear. Anthony appropriates and transforms much of the classroom dialogue for use in his own text and in his writing conference with a younger student. The teacher's emphasis upon imagery and figurative language through words such as "description" and "getting a picture in the reader's mind" reemerges in Anthony's own dialogue. Yet, Anthony has made it his own by transforming the exact words and the concepts for use in other contexts. In contrast, Anita has internalized very little that is available for us to see. Description and imagery play no role in her initial text and are not discussed in her writing conference.

In one case, the student succeeds, in another case the student does not succeed. But succeed at what? Anthony has succeeded at matching the teacher's image of what constitutes a good text, while Anita has not succeeded in matching the teacher's image. Instead, Anita produced an oral text about having fun rather than a personal piece filled with imagery. Because this text was not valued by the teacher in the conference, Anita did not develop her original text but rather compromised by writing something new.

What are the underlying issues here? I suggest that the values of the teacher, the norms of the classroom, and the patterns of interaction that were apparent in the teacher-student writing conferences shaped to a large extent the opportunities that students had to internalize the dialogue. Although both students had "equal" opportunity to participate in the classroom dialogue, the teacher responded to them in different ways in the writing conferences. Anthony "connected" with the teacher in the conference (and at

additional times within the classrom), and she valued his work because it matched her image of a good text. Also, Anthony's home background and values seemed to fit in well with predominant white middle-class values, even though he was Latino. There was a kind of cultural and personal congruity between the teacher and him. For these reasons, Anthony had opportunities to internalize the dialogue.

This does not seem to be the case for Anita. Because her work did not fit the teacher's image of a good text, perhaps, in part, due to cultural differences between herself and the teacher, Anita did not seem to have the same opportunity to internalize the dialogue. Her preexisting beliefs and knowledge may have resisted the focus on imagery, while her negative feelings toward the teacher prevented her from participating in the classroom interactions.

The cases of Anthony and Anita link up with existing literature on writing conferences and the relationship between the teacher's role and the texts students produce. For instance, Michaels and her colleagues have found that response by the teacher and revision by the student were geared toward finding a match with the teacher's implicit schema. Power differences between teacher and student resulted in lack of synchrony between students' intended meanings and the the teacher's expectations (Michaels, 1987; Ulichney and Watson-Gegeo, 1989). Additionally, Freedman and Sperling (1985) found that teachers display differential treatment towards students of differing ability levels and ethnic backgrounds. The study presented here supports that research, while suggesting that differential treatment and lack of synchrony between teacher and student influence what students actually internalize or learn from classroom interactions.

What does the study suggest about the utility of the Harre model for describing the internalization process? The Harre model explains internalization quite well when we see the reemergence of dialogue as in the case of Anthony. However, the model is less helpful in explaining what is happening when there is a lack of reemergence of dialogue, as in the case of Anita. Yet this lack of reemergence can point us in a direction for examining, and perhaps changing, writing practices in schools. The study suggests that an understanding of literature and writing process ideals by the teacher does not necessarily translate into changing traditional norms of interaction between teacher and students. Instead, the study challenges whether teachers should impose white middle-class expectations about what constitutes a good text and the study suggests a strong need for teachers to have knowledge, sensitivity, and understanding of students from different cultures.

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